P.S. to the NEWS
by PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY

Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002
Phone: 618-462-5415

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KISSINGER AT SALZBURG

When Oliver Cromwell had his portrait painted, he instructed the artist, "Paint me as I am, wart and all." Television is a medium which does exactly that. It presents an unretouched picture with all the warts and wrinkles. Television does even more. It is also a window which looks into the soul behind the face and voice, as no other medium can.

It is almost impossible for anyone to conceal from the TV camera emotion, evasion, hate, guilt, lying, or nervousness. There are a few actors and con artists who can cheat the tube, but not many.

Thus, Richard Nixon lost the presidency in 1960 on the night of the first Nixon-Kennedy debate when television revealed that Kennedy had superior confidence in his capacity for leadership. Edmund Muskie kicked away his hope to be President the day he lost control of his emotions in a snowstorm in New Hampshire with the TV cameras mercilessly grinding away.

Thomas Eagleton was dropped as a vice presidential candidate after that Sunday when he faced the press on television and the public saw the beads of nervous perspiration on his forehead.

To this list we must now add Henry Kissinger. The television closeups of his temper tantrum in Salzburg revealed him as emotionally unstrung, his voice quavering and tears in his eyes. This was a side of Kissinger that few people knew, although it was probably suspected by those reporters who have commented on his closely-bitten fingernails.

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It is a cause for concern that this man who trembled in public is the same one who ordered a strategic alert of our nuclear forces on October 25. He subsequently promised to explain what Soviet action could possibly have justified that emergency alert, but he has never explained it to this day. We still don't know whether the alert was caused by a real Soviet threat, or merely by another occasion of Kissinger's emotional distress.

The straw that appears to have precipitated Kissinger's outburst in Salzburg was a hostile personal question by a reporter at a press conference a week earlier. If Kissinger's Salzburg behavior was an authentic reaction to a keenly-felt personal injury, then the television closeups revealed him as too unstable to have his finger on our nuclear trigger.

If Kissinger's behavior was not genuine, then it must have been a dramatic act to arouse sympathy among the press and Congress, to win votes of confidence from both, and thereby to avoid cross-examination on crucial issues. There is no reason why he, alone of all public figures, should be immune from close questioning. As Harry Truman was fond of saying, if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.

In either event, it is time to get on with the business of questioning Dr. Kissinger. After we resolve the question of whether he did or did not order the 17 wiretaps on the press and on his own staff, then let's move on to asking the life-or-death question of why he ordered the strategic alert last October.

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